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By Maggie Ybarra

Critical language in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 ensures that the International Law Enforcement Academy will remain in Roswell, but leaves open the possibility that it could be managed by an out-of-state entity.

The bill allocates \$5 million in funding for the continuation of the Roswell-based program for fiscal year 2010.

However, it also stipulates that the Secretary of State must develop and submit a competitive multi-year plan and bid for the continued operation of the facility to the Committees on Appropriations.

The ILEA offers advanced management courses for leadership, physical fitness and crime scene management and facilities like computer labs and interpreter booths to senior level law enforcement officers from around the world.

A New Mexico Tech study estimated that ILEA creates 42 full-time jobs within the regional economy.

Rep. Harry Teague, D-N.M., said during a Saturday press conference at the ILEA, 47 Gail Harris St., that although the bidding process would make it possible for a university from another state to run the program, New Mexico universities would still have an advantage due to their proximity.

That means that New Mexico Tech, which currently runs the program in conjunction with Sam Houston State University, Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell and Science Applications International Co., would be a strong contender, Teague said.

“If another University wants to run it they would have to take into consideration that they would have to handle it down here,” he said.

Teague said Sens. Tom Udall and Jeff Bingaman, both New Mexico Democrats, were instrumental in keeping the ILEA in Roswell after the political climate was churned by the resignation of Republican Sen. Pete Domenici.

Their effort thwarted hopes that it could be relocated in his absence, Teague said.

“It upset some people at the state department because they were waiting for Pete Domenici to leave so that ILEA could leave, too,” he said. “They didn’t just want it taken out of the state, they wanted to take it out of the country.”